

PILOT PROJECT GUIDELINES
Effective September 1, 2007

AUTHORITY

The Regulations Governing Pupil Transportation state:

8 VAC 20-70-460 – Specifications.

“It is the intent of the Board of Education to accommodate new equipment and technology that will better facilitate the safe and efficient transportation of students. When a new technology, piece of equipment, or component is desired to be applied to the school bus, it must have the approval of the Virginia Department of Education and must meet the following criteria:

1. The technology, equipment, or component shall not compromise the effectiveness or integrity of any major safety system.
2. The technology, equipment, or component shall not diminish the safety of the interior of the bus.
3. The technology, equipment, or component shall not create additional risk to students who are boarding or exiting the bus or are in or near the school bus loading zone.
4. The technology, equipment, or component shall not require undue additional activity or responsibility for the driver.
5. The technology, equipment, or component shall generally increase efficiency or safety, or both, of the bus, generally provide for a safer or more pleasant experience for the occupants and pedestrians in the vicinity of the bus, or shall generally assist the driver and make his many tasks easier to perform.

Buses and school activity vehicles must conform to the specifications relative to construction and design effective on the date of procurement. Any variation from the specifications, in the form of additional equipment or changes in style of equipment, without prior approval of the Department of Education, is prohibited. The Department of Education shall issue specifications and standards for public school buses to reflect desired technology or safety improvements for the then current model year.”

8 VAC 20-70-470 – Adjustments.

“The Superintendent of Public Instruction is authorized to make such adjustments from time to time in technical specifications as are deemed necessary in the interest of safety and efficiency in school bus operation. This includes the issuance of chassis

specifications by size, type and model year. Authority is also granted for conducting investigations and field tests of certain pertinent vehicle components.”

Code of Virginia, § 22.1-16

The Board of Education may adopt bylaws for its own government and promulgate such regulations as may be necessary to carry out its powers and duties and the provisions of this title.

Code of Virginia, §22.1-177

The Board may make regulations relating to the construction, design, operation, equipment, and color of public school buses and shall have the authority to issue an order prohibiting the operation on public streets and highways of any public school bus which does not comply with such regulations. Any such order shall be enforced by the Department of State Police.

Local school boards may, notwithstanding any regulation to the contrary, display decals depicting the flag of the United States on the sides and rear of school buses as long as any such decal does not obstruct the name of the school division or the number of the school bus and is no larger than 100 square inches.

No regulation of the Board shall unreasonably limit the authority of any local school division to purchase and use school buses using compressed natural gas or other alternative fuels or convert its school buses to use compressed natural gas or other alternative fuels.

PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING A PILOT PROJECT

Procedures of the Technical Advisory Committee

1. The committee will meet quarterly as needed.
2. Three pilot projects will be reviewed at each meeting.
3. Committee may request additional information on the pilot.

Guidelines to Vendors on Pilot Projects

It is the responsibility of the vendor to ask school divisions to participate in a pilot project. The pilot project will need to be tested and completed in multiple regions of the state before it can be forwarded to the Specifications Committee to be added to the bid list.

1. Applications for pilot projects must be made by the vendor to the Department of Education. Applications will be forwarded to the Technical Advisory Committee for review.
2. Ten copies of the application must be submitted to the Department of Education.
3. The application must contain:
 - A. Details on product and product claims for measurable results.
 - B. Letter acknowledging the cost of installation and/or removal of product to return vehicle back to pre-installed condition will be the responsibility of the vendor.
 - C. Letters from school bus manufacturers stating that installation and proper use of the product
 1. Does not alter terms of current warranty
 2. does not alter or effect safety standards of FMVSS for the vehicle
 - D. Letter acknowledging installation and proper use of product does not violate state law
 - E. Pilot request letter from LEA
 - F. Vendor responsible for measurable data collection from
 1. Endorser (Director/Supervisor)
 2. Mechanic/technician

Application Process for a Pilot Project

1. An application (Attachment A) must be submitted to the Department of Education that gives detailed information on the pilot project. It will include information on what the project is, what school divisions will test the project, etc.
2. The Department of Education will forward the request to the Technical Advisory Committee for review at their quarterly meeting.
3. At its meeting, the Technical Advisory Committee will review the pilot request and have vendors present to answer questions.
4. If the Committee approves the pilot request, a letter will be sent to the vendor indicating this. If the Committee does not approve the pilot, a letter will be sent to the vendor indicating the reasons why pilot was not approved.
5. After initial region pilot test and to meet the multi-region test requirement no additional approval letters need to be issued. There will be no additional authorization letter issued to extend testing in initial region.
6. Product will go from pilot to specifications after completion of pilot test period and on recommendation of Specifications Committee.

APPLICATION FOR PILOT PROJECT

Product to be piloted _____

School Division _____

Number of Buses _____

Bus Numbers, model year, and type of bus product will be installed on

Bus Number

Model Year

Type of Bus

Detailed Description of Product

Cost of installation _____

Vendor submitting request

Pilot Control Number _____

Pilot Approved for Installation _____ Not approved _____

Date approved by Technical Advisory Committee _____

Letter sent to Vendor on approval _____

Start up date _____ Completion Date _____

**Approval Notice of Pilot Project
EXAMPLE**

Letter to Vendor and School divisions involved

Dear

This is to notify you that the Technical Advisory Committee has reviewed the information received concerning the pilot project for _____. You may now install the product on your school bus. This pilot is approved for _____ months and upon completion of the pilot, a report on the attached form must be submitted to the Department of Education. This report will be forwarded to the Technical Advisory Committee for final review.

You will receive a letter shortly after the committee's _____ meeting on whether the pilot was approved.

If you have any questions, please contact the Pupil Transportation Office at (804) 225-2037. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

Approval of Product for inclusion in Specifications
EXAMPLE

Dear

The report on the pilot project for _____ has been reviewed by the Technical Advisory Committee and has approved the product. The information on this product will be forwarded to the Specifications Committee for their decision on inclusion in the specifications.

Sincerely,

Disapproval of product
EXAMPLE

Dear

The Technical Advisory Committee has reviewed the report on the pilot project for _____. Based on the information received, the pilot project was not approved by this committee.

Please remove _____ from your buses and submit a letter to the Department of Education when the removal has been completed.

If you have any questions concerning this, please call (804) 225-2037.

Sincerely,

Report on Pilot Project

Pilot Project _____

Vendor _____

School Divisions involved _____

Number of buses involved _____

Attached is a report from each of the local school divisions that participated in this pilot project.

Product Quality _____

Product Performance _____

Would you recommend this item for use on Virginia School Buses?

Yes _____

No _____

Reason _____

Signed _____ Date _____